

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

The Labor Relations Committee met on Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 4:45 p.m. in Conference Room No. 1 at the Willmar City Office Building.

Present:	Steve Ahmann	Chair
	Shawn Mueske	Vice Chair
	Ron Christianson	Member
	Tim Johnson	Alternate Member

Others present: City Administrator Larry Kruse, Public Works Director Sean Christensen, Shelby Lindrud, "West Central Tribune" journalist, and Janell Sommers, Administrative Assistant.

Item No. 1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Council Member Ahmann at 4:46 p.m.

Item No. 2 Public Works Director Vacation Adjustment (Motion)

City Administrator Larry Kruse presented a recommendation which resulted from a request by Public Works Director Sean Christensen to increase his vacation accrual rate to reflect his 13 years of experience as an Engineer prior to his employment with the City. Public Works Director Christensen currently accrues vacation at 80 hours a year which was agreed to at hiring, and it is staff's recommendation to recognize his prior experience which would be a positive retention investment for the City. It was noted the change in accrual rate would be at no cost to the City.

The Committee discussed the recommendation and expressed concern for setting a precedent since this type of request has never occurred before. Council Member Mueske stated a mechanism needs to be developed to address such issues. A motion was made by Council Member Mueske, seconded by Council Member Christianson to direct City Administrator Kruse to develop a policy based on research with other cities to be brought back to the next Labor Relations Committee meeting.

Item No. 3 Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Item No. 4 Human Resources Job Description Review (Information)

City Administrator Kruse presented a revised job description which focused on the duties of a Human Resources person and detailed the activities this individual would be assigned. He also submitted for review a list of cities of similar size in Minnesota that have a Human Resource person. The Committee questioned whether these communities were staffed with a Human Resources person full or part-time as concern was expressed whether Willmar needs a full-time person in this capacity. City Administrator Kruse explained that currently most of the job duties are spread across the organization. Council Member Johnson stated he believes it should be a full-time position on the management level. After further discussion, the Committee directed Kruse to provide the job descriptions of employees currently doing the Human Resource functions with strikethroughs for a visual at the next Labor Relations Committee meeting.

Item No. 5 Discontinuation of the Assessing Department – Post Employment Incentive (Motion)

City Administrator Kruse updated the Committee on the Assessing Department merger with Kandiyohi County. He informed the Committee that offers have been made by the County for the two remaining City Assessing employees and it is their decision to accept. By contract they may exercise their

option to continue to work for the City by bumping to another department filling the position of the least senior unit employee as long as they meet the minimum qualifications. In an effort to support employees who have a significant amount of education and experience who decide to move to the County to continue to work in the assessing field, an incentive may be appropriate. City Administrator Kruse stated the County has offered a somewhat comparable compensation package, however employees with many years of experience will not receive as much vacation as they currently earn and net with insurance they may earn slightly less than if they stayed with the City. In some cases the Early Retirement Incentive Program's monthly payment may make the difference

City Administrator Kruse recommended the Committee consider that subject to the AFSCME Union signing off, the Council approves entering into an agreement to make the Early Retirement Incentive Program available to employees with more than 20 years of service whose department is being abolished. This would be subject to the City Attorney's review to ensure compliance with IRS regulations to contribute \$25,800 to the employee's HSA account or another permissible payment method that is tax deferred. This incentive is subject to an Assessing employee becoming an employee of Kandiyohi County Assessing.

Council Member Mueske moved the recommendation of the City Administrator. Council Member Christianson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion was held pertaining to continuing training for the Council. The Committee also noted that the six-month performance evaluation for City Administrator Kruse is due in the near future and the format will be emailed and to be evaluated by the Council.

A motion was made by Council Member Mueske, and seconded by Council Member Christianson to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers
Administrative Assistant